



OPFOR - Sparring Partner or Punching Bag





Ground Rules

Question and discuss !

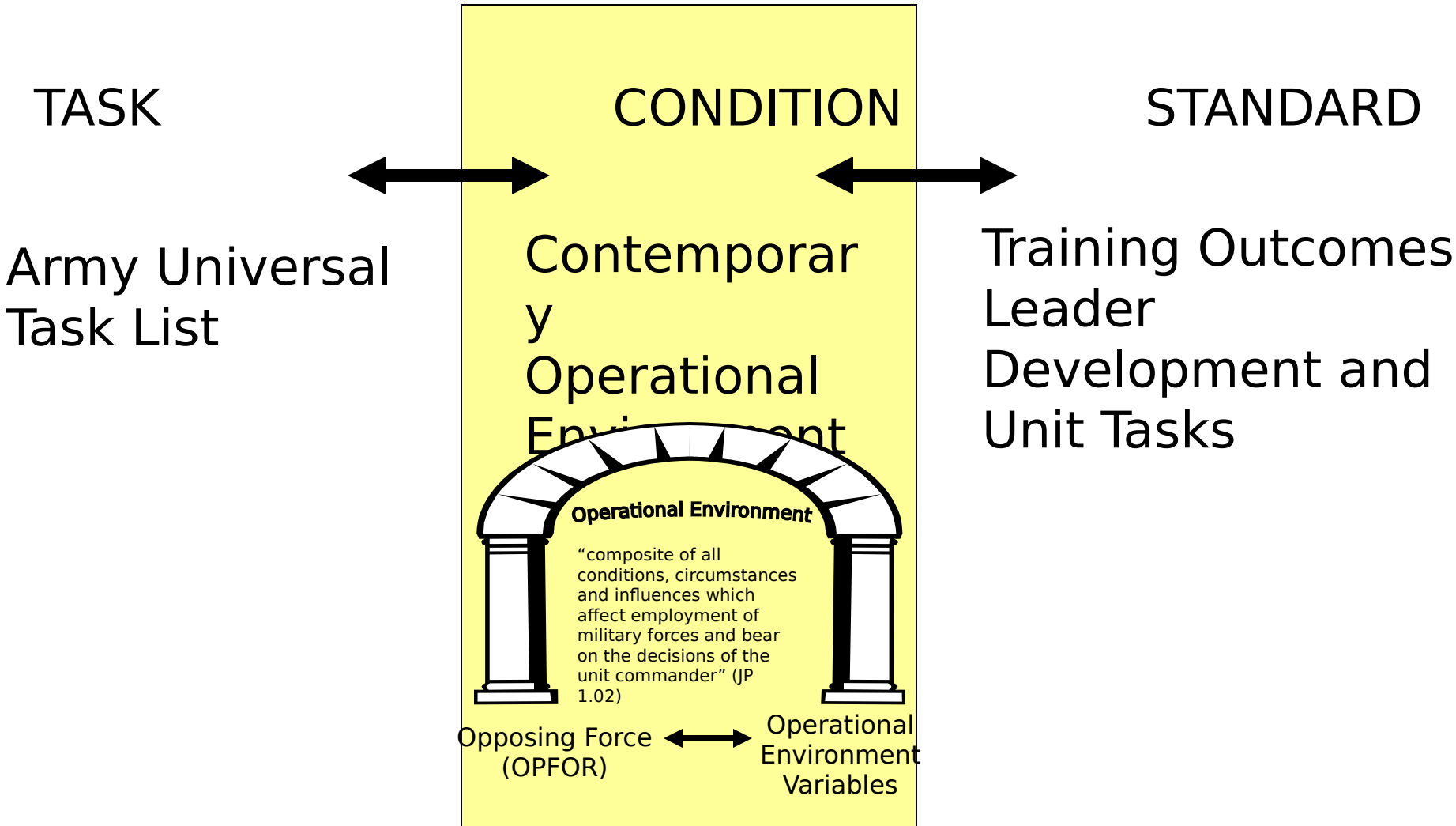
What needs to be fixed and how do we do it ?

This briefing is not about OPFOR whining it is about the proper OPFOR role.

Can we develop leaders for the objective force with the current exercise design methodology and OPFOR construct ?



Army Training Model





Training Scenarios

- Trying to stimulate an effect while remaining feasible and realistic.
- Two levels of training - unit training (collective) and leader development.
- COE is not just about the OPFOR. The COE variables and their interaction provide the robust environment and context for OPFOR operations.



Training Objectives and the COE

Training objectives drawn from the AUTL.

“Winning” does not mean training objective was accomplished.

“Losing” does not mean training objective was not achieved.

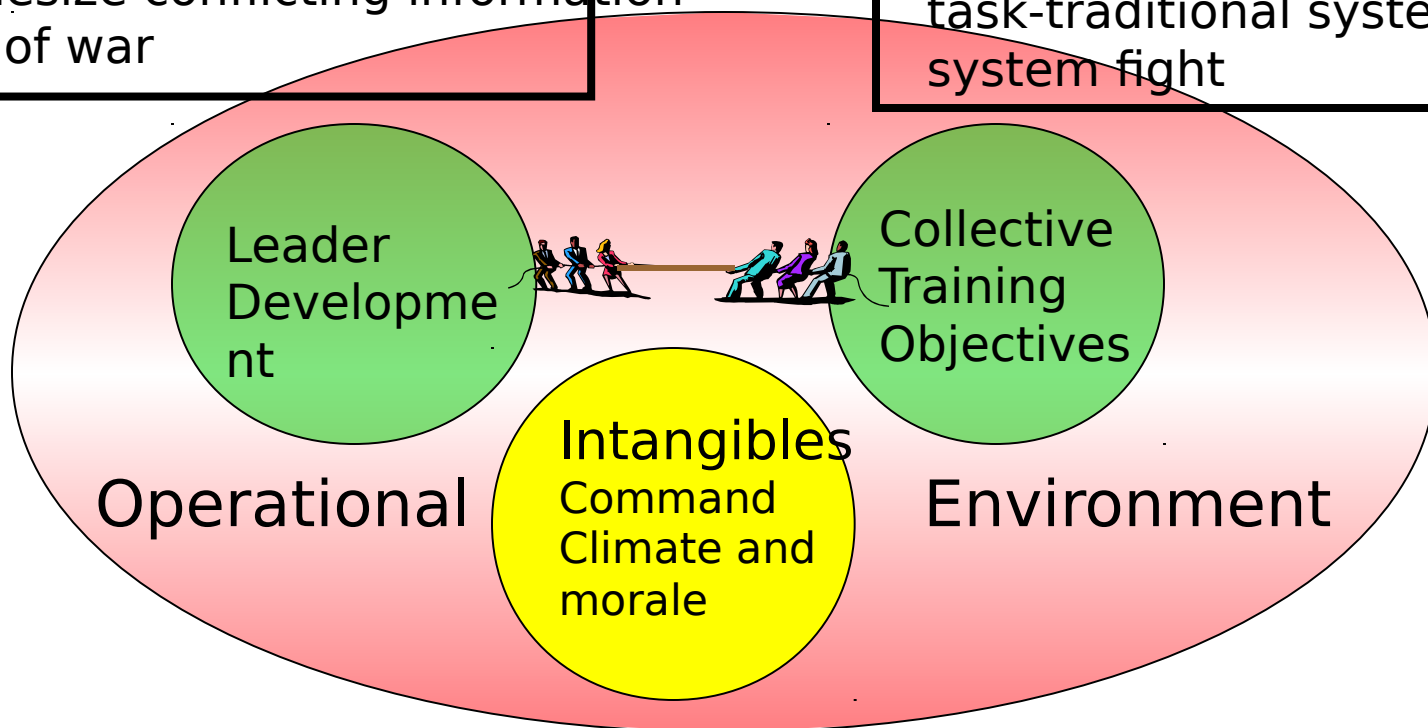
Some indication that COE drives more “protective” behavior because of ambiguity.

Senior Trainer's Dilemma

Tension between leader development, unit training objectives and command climate/morale

- Creative use of resources
- Adapt to the unforeseen
- Synthesize conflicting information
- “Art” of war

- Focus on synchronization of all BOSs
- Multi-echelon training
- Need to train toughest task-traditional system on system fight





Training Environment

Environment of complex interacting variables

Outcome

Adaptable, innovative creative leaders

Tension Points

Structured environment necessary for synchronization "practice"

Opportunistic and unpredictable OPFOR

Rotation 03-03 Missions Requested
"Attack against enemy security zone.
Attack against enemy main defensive belt.

Movement to contact..."

Systems Warfare

Force on force - battle management construct

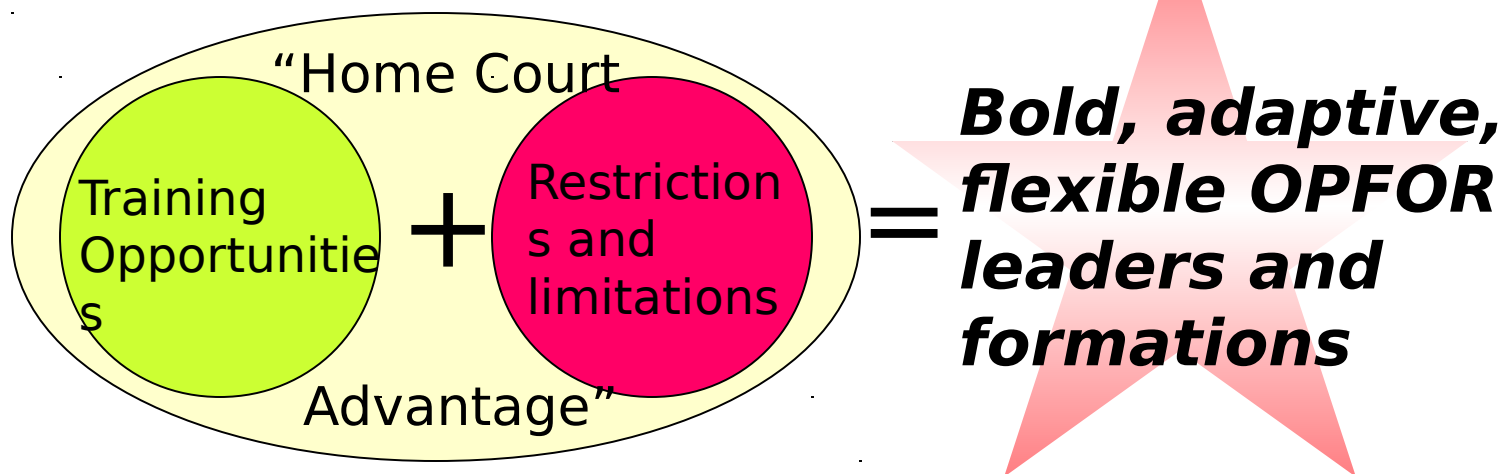


OPFOR Edge

Review of all CTCs - OPFOR accomplishes task and purpose >90% of all missions.

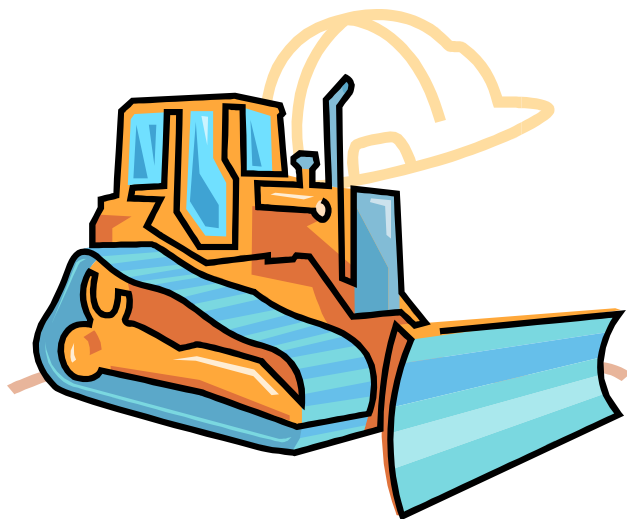
Historical review of US Army actual combat missions does not reflect US defeat at this level.

WHY ?



OPFOR units train year round on the same terrain and must repeatedly overcome numerous restrictions and BLUE advantages

Leveling the Playing Field





Most Common OE Adjustments

Directed OPFOR course of action

- Satisfy multi-echelon training (“Get everyone in a fight”)
- Must have a traditional system on system battle

Degradation or denial of OPFOR “niche” technology

- Seen to be infeasible for OPFOR to have “high tech.”
- Potential to be a “show stopper” for BLUE plan - training objectives in jeopardy.

Weather and terrain chosen to optimize BLUE capabilities

- Training unit commander needs the chance to practice with all systems available.
- No ability to reproduce large urban fight or tunnel complexes

Effects of civilian populace isolated from “heavy metal fight”

- Must train on “blocking and tackling” without interference

*Tension between chaotic battlefield and
need for structure to practice
synchronization*



Operational Environment Effects and Implementation

The GOOD

- CTCs aggressively implementing elements of the OE in exercise design and execution.
- Forcing leaders and intelligence officers to analyze OPFOR not simply template
- OE variables on the complex battlefield are driving leader development - ambiguity and options

The Not So GOOD

- Inadequate representation of weather/terrain effects. (Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan)
- Civilians on the battlefield are underrepresented. (Somalia)
- Understanding of technology available on open market is poor. (NVGs, ATGM, WMD)
- Coalition forces not normally present. (DS, Afghanistan)
- Shaping operations extreme. (Kosovo)
- Systems warfare limited by training construct

Effects

- Complex terrain key enabler for OPFOR
- Human dilemmas effect on combat operations
- Technology surprises not seen
- Unrealistic appreciation of ability to shape by fires alone
- Leaders focus on synchronization vice adaptation



Weather and Terrain

Who selects the weather conditions and terrain for the exercise ?

Weather - bad weather limits BLUE commander's ability to train "all systems".

- Weather key enabler for OPFOR

Terrain - complex terrain allows OPFOR to create windows of opportunity.

- Urban
- Mountains/jungle/swamp
- Underground complexes (e.g. Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, East Germany)

- Simulations (CBS) models weather effects and complex terrain p
- Dirt CTCs not resourced to fully integrate complex terrain.



Some Unit Observation

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Loss of predictability of the enemy.

Perception that the COE is unfair- not a level playing field
OPFOR has all the “advantages” e.g. complex terrain, civilian populace.

Number of options available to the OPFOR for COA does not reflect doctrinal “constraints”

OPFOR has too many “high tech toys”. No enemy in the world has technology equal to the US.

Introduction of civilians and paramilitary is positive step for training

OPFOR perceived advantages that may degrade multi-echelon training.

OPFOR Observations

Shaping operations go far beyond shaping. OPFOR attrited by long range Joint Fires to “level” the playing field.

BLUE brings a very large slice of non-organic combat assets and combat multipliers to every fight.

Desire to train “everyone” equally and get to a “heavy metal fight” forces OPFOR to adopt untenable courses of action.

Systems warfare is limited - destruction of C2, logistics, engineers or other enablers prevented due to impact on other training.



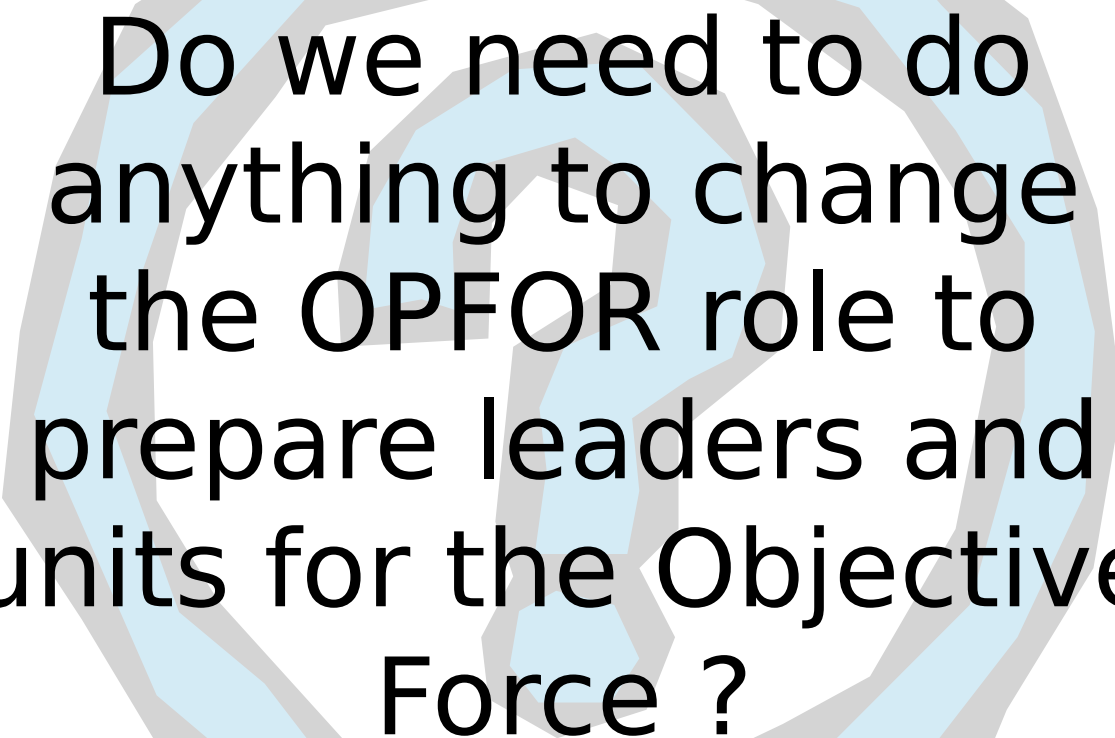
What does it all mean ?

Threat model (OE) is developed by TRADOC to provide the framework to drive collective training outcomes and leader development.

Adjustment of the OE by elimination of components jeopardizes the construct. OE variables and OPFOR are linked.

OE changes and is updated by examination of world wide military and security trends as well as what the OPFOR learns at the CTCs

The OE is designed to produce dilemmas ! There are no easy solutions.

A large, light blue, multi-layered octagonal shape is centered on the slide, serving as a background for the text.

Do we need to do
anything to change
the OPFOR role to
prepare leaders and
units for the Objective
Force ?

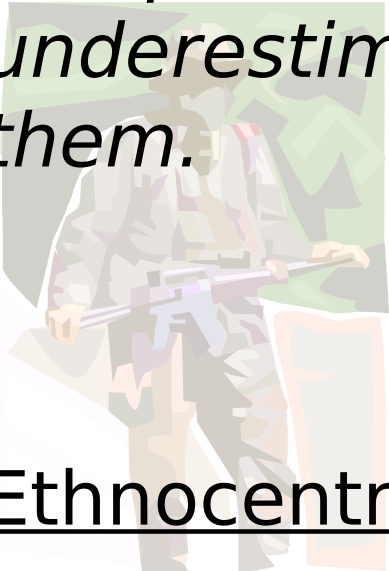


Obligatory Quote

“Self confidence is important for effective military behavior, but too often it has been inflated into foolish overconfidence....The result of this tendency has been a depressing and unedifying list of military commanders and planners who have seriously underestimated the qualities of those facing them.”

Ken Booth
Strategy and

Ethnocentrism





What Can We Really See ?

At Operation ANACONDA in March 2002, an intensive pre-battle reconnaissance effort focused every available surveillance and target acquisition system on a tiny, ten-by-ten kilometer battlefield. Yet fewer than 50 percent of all the al Qaeda positions ultimately identified in the course of the fighting on this battlefield were discovered prior to ground contact. In fact, most fire received by U.S. forces in ANACONDA came from initially unseen, unanticipated al Qaeda fighting positions.⁶⁹

How could such things happen in an era of persistent reconnaissance drones, airborne radars, satellite surveillance, thermal imaging, and hypersensitive electronic eavesdropping equipment? The answer is that the earth's surface remains an extremely complex environment with an abundance of natural and manmade cover and concealment available for those militaries capable of exploiting it.

Steven Biddle
"Afghanistan and the New Way of War"